



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter
1st Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division (M)
Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07



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Hello again from sunny Iraq. It is no surprise that the temperature has continued to rise and plateau at a not so friendly 115-120 degrees Fahrenheit. There is no need to worry though as the Phoenix leadership and Soldiers ensure one another are hydrated and prepared to conduct operations. In this issue of the Phoenix newsletter, we will hear from Phoenix Padre (the Battalion Chaplain), the Eagle's Line of Sight Section, and the leadership of the Ravens, the Nighthawks, and the Renegades. To Dare is To Do!!

PHOENIX PROJECTS

In the past two weeks, the Phoenix Battalion has been very active. Our two biggest events were the Tarmiyah Qada Building Grand-Opening and the Husseinya Civil Defense Center (Fire Station) Grand-Opening. At the Tarmiyah Qada Building, we had a distinguished guest, Paul Brinkley, the Defense Deputy Undersecretary for Business Transformation. Although the majority of the Phoenix Soldiers did not know who this gentleman was, it was fun to see all the Iraqi Soldiers taking pictures of this little known American as if he were a celebrity.



Above: A local Sheik escorts Paul Brinkley at the Tarmiyah Qada Building Grand-Opening.



Above: Fire Fighters display their new equipment at the Husseinya Civil Defense Center Grand-Opening.

In Husseinya, the fire fighters lined up in their new fire fighting gear and stood beside their fire trucks as guests arrived for the ceremony. It was a great event with many facets of the growing Iraq government coming together to celebrate this special event, to include Iraqi Army Soldiers and Iraqi Policemen providing security and workers from the Ministry of Electricity working diligently to ensure the transformers provide power at the Defense Center. At the end of the brief ceremony, the local Sheik escorted the guests around the station and showed off the new quarters and new kitchen/cafeteria designed to feed up to 25 fire fighters. The local Iraqis' pride for the new Civil Defense Center was evident as one man asked how this building compared to an American Fire Station and I told him it came very close. As you can all see, the Phoenix Battalion continues to be a force in the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure and future.

Projects PAO Manager – 2LT Jordan Maxcey

EAGLE LOS SECTION

1st Brigade's Signal Company consists of several important communications elements. One element that's continually called upon for its dependable capabilities is the LOS Section.

Bravo Company's High Capacity Line of Sight (LOS) Section is responsible for establishing and maintaining all of 1st Brigade's internal line of sight communications links between the maneuver Battalions on and off Camp Taji. The LOS section also established and maintains the external communication links to 4ID. The LOS communications links provide redundancy and expanded bandwidth for commanders. The LOS section consists of 5 Multi-channel Transmissions System Operators-Maintainers: SGT Glover, SPC Everman, SPC Wright, SPC Rogers, and SPC Garcia. The LOS section is led by SGT Glover.



Above: SPC Garcia, SPC Everman, SGT Glover set up a HCLOS antenna for the LOS.

The LOS is a delicate system which calls for constant monitoring and operators standing ready to trouble shoot links on Camp Taji or traveling to remote patrol bases external to the FOB. Each Multi-channel Transmissions System Operator is considered an expert in signal flow, signal propagation, and overall operations of the High Capacity Line Of Sight antennas and radio shelters.

They are expected to troubleshoot the system on all levels from complete signal loss to slight signal degradation. LOS operators monitor all the links 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure optimal performance.

Due to the efforts of the Bravo's LOS Section, the Brigade maintains the largest number of deployed LOS Communications links within the entire Division.

The LOS, along with other vital communications capabilities such as KU-Band Satellite, EPLRS, and Smart-T allow for the dynamic advantage the 1BCT enjoys on the modern battlefield.

Eagle 5 – 1LT James Simpson

A NOTE FROM PHOENIX PADRE

“...Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)

In our struggles, when we feel our strength failing, joy (gladness) is not the first thing on our mind. Sorrow, fear and doubt more closely match our thoughts. Nehemiah wants his people to put their trust in a good and faithful God. He knows that when their focus is on Him that they will be able to endure their current hardships—even when those hardships were a result of their own shortcomings.

This word strength also means a “place of safety”, “refuge” and “fortress”. It is in turning to God, trusting in his faithfulness and learning from and about Him, that we grow in joy and find the security we need to sustain us in our times of need.

Blessings,
Phoenix Padre – CH David Fell

RAVENS

The Raven Soldiers are in full action mode this month as we conduct our Change of Command inventories. For those of you not aware of this great Army tradition, the Change of Command inventories are conducted each time a new commander assumes responsibility for a company. As the end of my tenure as commander is approaching, the incoming commander, CPT Thao Reed, is inventorying all of the Company's Army issued equipment. It is a very intense task that involves every single Soldier in the Company. What makes it more difficult, is the fact that we are deployed and are not stopping missions to conduct these inventories. The pressure is intense during the inventories as every widget, gadget, and vehicle must be inventoried; but its successful execution is just part of an orderly transfer.



Above: SPC Craig Fitu holds the Raven Guidon to showcase the company's Pride.

In addition to the inventories, the company is continuing its other missions. In the past two weeks, the Company conducted lane training on Camp Taji. The lane training served as a refresher course for the Soldiers that conduct frequent combat patrols off Camp Taji. The training focused on sharing techniques that have been learned across the Brigade on how to better protect ourselves when conducting patrols outside the wire. The Military police platoon recently participated in missions with the Civil Affairs teams to

deliver school supplies and teaching materials to the local schools in the area. The MPs delivered pencils, paper, and other basic school supplies to ensure the children could learn and study. This past week, the Thunderbird platoon assembled and delivered 22 wheelchairs to the local medical clinics in the small villages surrounding Camp Taji. The Soldiers reported that the local children were very grateful for the gift of mobility that the chairs provided. And finally, the soldiers of the Battalion's route clearance team recently found their 24th improvised explosive device. The team safely identified the device and assisted in its safe disposal by the Battalion's EOD team.

This month the summer is starting to heat up but as you can tell, the Company is not letting it slow our pace. The Soldiers remain highly motivated and energized as we continue our efforts to leave this country a little better off than when we arrived. Ravens...Live with honor

Raven 6 – CPT Lou Castillo

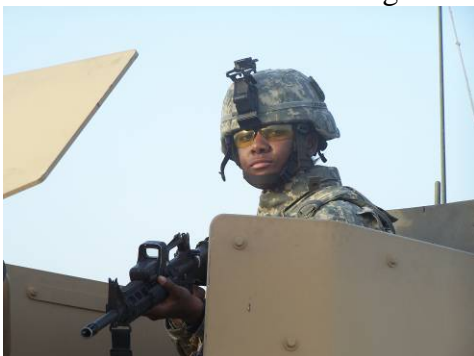
NIGHTHAWKS

Here's the Alpha Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion update for first two weeks of June 2006!



Above: SPC Mirabel Fuentes and SPC Amanda Weber both play pivotal roles in maintaining the Nighthawks' excellence.

Headquarters platoon continues to be the work horse for the company. Several soldiers from the Common Ground Station squad (CPL Cuiksa, SPC Major, SPC Collins, SPC Naramore, and PFC Jablonski) are currently manning the Guard Towers around Camp Taji, and are conducting patrols with the Explosives, Ordnance, and Demolitions (EOD) personnel security detail team. The Intelligence and Electronic Warfare (IEW) section consisting of SGT McManus, SPC Fuentes, and CW3 Campbell continue to maintain 24HR systems support for the Brigade; often working 18 to 20 hour days when the systems have problems. The Analysis and Control team (SPC Knappenberger, PFC Bischoff, and PFC Vorgang) continues to make huge learning advancements with the Trojan Spirit Light, regularly conducting Video Telephone Conference's (VTCs) for the Brigade Commander to talk with his counterparts back at FT Hood, TX. The Headquarters Squad consisting of PFC McDowell, PFC Keller, SPC Weber and SGT Herring continue to keep the company running by providing much needed supplies and tracking promotions, leave dates, and company training. Currently Captain Bell and First Sergeant Welch are enjoying their Rest and Relaxation leaving 1st Lieutenant Allen in command and Sergeant First Class Walden the as First Sergeant.



Above: 1LT Deshaunda Allen serves as gunner during a recent Officer Professional Development exercise.

We are all glad to see the half way mark come and go and we all look forward to returning home to our families and friends. We want to thank you all for being so supportive and understanding the importance of our mission. Thank You!

Nighthawk 7 – SFC Charles T. Walden

A WORD FROM RENEGADE 6

Hello members of the FRG, allow me to introduce myself. I am CPT Dan R. Walker Jr., and I have just taken command of the mighty Renegades. It is an honor to command such an outstanding group of Soldiers. I have only been in command for about a week now but have noticed the morale of the Renegades is outstanding. I am certain that I will enjoy my time here. I feel it is a privilege to be writing the members of the FRG to share with you some experiences of our Soldiers. And while everyone is anticipating passing the half way marker, we all understand that we still have a job to do and will continue to do our best to accomplish the mission.



Above: PFC Jody Neilson, 1SG Ramon Apolinario, and PFC Michael Johnson played a large role in making HHD's Change-of-Command Ceremony a huge success.

While I have not had time to do a story on any one set of Soldiers, I have already had some outstanding experiences. For example, while on our way out to our patrol bases

during my change of command inventory, the Soldiers of the 3rd Squad PSD led by SSG Parker really showed me that they knew their stuff and performed with the utmost professionalism. We made it safely to each patrol base in 1BCT sector and were even able to help some local Iraqis put out a fire. The Soldiers in my orderly room were also quick to volunteer for the mission and did an outstanding job. SPC Brown served as our gunner and recently beat both 1LT Nguyen, the HHD XO, and CPT Ed Cox, the former HHD Commander, in a grudge match to assemble and disassemble the 50 caliber machine gun the fastest. I will be sure to get plenty of practice before I challenge her.

During my transition before my change of command, I got to know and work with 1SG Apolinario, currently the acting CSM, and my XO, 1LT Nguyen. They both did an outstanding job during the change of command ceremony and it was truly a memorable experience. I am looking forward to working with this team and we will all strive to continue to make the renegades and outstanding organization.



Above: CPT Dan Walker takes hold of the HHD Guidon from LTC John Cross.

Lastly, I want to give special thanks to CPT Ed Cox, the outgoing commander. During our change of command, Ed was especially helpful and really gave me a good feeling about the organization I would be taking over. We worked some long days, and some days we decided to cut out a little early.

Overall, the change of command transition went very well. CPT Cox will be attending the University of Syracuse to receive his Masters Degree before going on to teach at West Point upon our return. But until then, he will remain in the Renegades working in the S3 plans shop...Sorry Ed. At least he got to get a sun tan down in Qatar for a few days.

Renegade Commander - CPT Dan Walker

PHOENIX 6

Hello from Taji! It has been hot and busy over here and the Soldiers of the battalion continue to put the mission first but always take care of each other. We have started to change out company commanders in the battalion and welcome a few new officers. The HHD change of command went extremely well on the 2nd of June and I would like to welcome CPT Dan Walker and his family to the command team. The HHC commander, CPT Lou Castillo, will change out early next month and is in the laborious process of conducting change of command inventories with the inbound commander, Captain Thao Reed.

Phoenix soldiers are operating all over the brigade area of operations and it seems like everywhere you go a soldier from the STB is there and doing a fantastic job.

We recently suffered our first wounded in action, SSG Williamson my personal security detachment NCOIC, was wounded during a combat patrol to the South of Taji. He is doing well. The Army doctors over here are absolutely world class and it is impressive how excellent the health care is. He will be evacuated back to the United States after some time in Germany. I would like to thank him once again for his leadership and dedication to his soldiers. God bless him and his family.



To Dare Is To Do

Larry A. Seaman
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

John W. Cross
LTC, EN
Commanding